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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/766,295	01/27/2004	Guy E. Horne JR.	02579-P0027B	9340

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EXAMINER
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KASZTEJNA, MATTHEW JOHN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3739

DATE MAILED: 11/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on August 21, 2006 has been entered.

### ***Notice of Amendment***

In response to the amendment filed on July 10, 2006, amended claims 1 and canceled claims 8-9 are acknowledged. The current rejections of the claims are *withdrawn*. The following new grounds of rejection are set forth:

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-7 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,749,560 to Konstorum et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,540,669 to Abe et al.

**In regard to claims 1-7 and 10-13**, Konstorum et al. disclose an endoscope 10 having a shaft 14 comprised of a frame 26 and a cover 32 (see Figure 1). Frame 26

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comprises a tube 40 that is preferably formed from a shape memory alloy material, such as Nitinol (see col. 3, lines 10-25). Tube 40 has slots 46 along at least part of its length where the pattern of slots can be varied and sections of slot patterns are provided, to vary the flexibility of the tube 40 (see col. 3, lines 29-51). The slots 46 provide the tube 40 with increased flexibility along the length of the first section 52 of the tube 40 (see col. 4, lines 1-5). Figure 3 shows that the slots 46 are positioned along a line parallel to the axis of the tube 40 and have an axis oriented at an angle to the axis of the tubular member, where the angle is in the range from zero to ninety degrees. Figure 3 also shows that the slots 46 are circumferentially positioned on the tube 40. Cover 32 is preferably comprised of a resilient plastic or polymer material (see col. 5, lines 7-8). Konstorum et al. are silent with respect to a sheath having three specific layers in addition to the tubular member. However, Konstorum et al. teaches that cover 32 could also include a structural reinforcement (see col. 5, lines 7-10). Abe et al. disclose an analogous endoscope having a flexible tube 1 with a sheath comprising a braided layer 22, a laminating layer 33 and a wear layer 34 and thus having three specific layers in addition to a tubular member 21 (see Fig. 5). Therefore, Abe et al. demonstrate that multi-layer tubular structures for endoscope are well known in the art. Accordingly, since Konstorum et al. disclose the use of structure reinforcement, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the endoscope of Konstorum et al. with the multi-layer arrangement disclosed by Abe et al. Thus, Konstorum et al. and Abe et al. disclose an endoscope having a sheath with

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specific layers (i.e. a barrier layer 32, a braided layer 22, a laminating layer 33 and a wear layer 34) in addition to the tubular member.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed July 10, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant states that Abe et al. fail to disclose a barrier layer disposed between the tubular member and the braided layer and jacketing the tubular member. However, as seen in Figure 5, Abe et al. clearly teaches of a barrier layer 32 which jackets the tubular member and is disposed between the tubular member and the fine wires 23 of the braided layer 22. Thus, as broadly as claimed, the combination of Konstorum et al. and Abe et al. meet the limitations of the recited claims.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew J. Kasztejna whose telephone number is (571) 272-6086. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8:30-6:00.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MJK *ML*

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